

13 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Imagery Analysis Service

SUBJECT: Suggested Improvements in the Programming
of OLYMPIC MEET Missions

REFERENCE: Director, IAS, Memorandum, dated
13 March 1973 (*attached*)

1. A copy of your memorandum was forwarded to DIA for action. Their response is attached. It is expected that the actions initiated will result in improvements in the quality and usability of OLYMPIC MEET coverage. If, in your opinion, no measurable improvements result, advise us soonest so that follow-up action can be taken.

2. Please also note paragraph 6 of the attached. If you determine that specific areas are not being imaged with sufficient continuity, please have them identified to [redacted] so that steps can be taken to provide added emphasis. [redacted] DDI/IRS, also can assist you in this.

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[redacted]

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Chairman
Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

Attachment



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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, ICBS

SUBJECT: IAS Suggested Improvements in the Programming of OLYMPIC MEET

Reference: IAS/R50-140/73, 13 March 1973.

1. Recommendations contained in the reference have been reviewed and the following comments are provided.
2. Mission planning in SEA is a coordinated effort between the GIANT SCALE and the OLYMPIC MEET. Area coverage, as well as LOCs, require effective weekly coverage. Where coordination will allow, collection by tactical systems is also considered. These assets are tasked to provide effective weekly coverage of the objectives outlined in the revised COMIREX Indo-China requirements paper currently being coordinated.
3. SAC has been requested to fly OMT missions as outlined in the IAS memorandum. Operational considerations due to SAM defenses will necessarily obviate complete adherence to the proposal.
4. Other operational factors will continue to have a major impact such as weather conditions, status of requirement satisfaction, buffer zone and border violation constraints.
5. The SR-71 does fly long straight segments and essentially provides the same quality as the OMT. This coverage, especially of Southern Laos, should be meeting the criteria recommended in the reference.
6. Reference paragraph 6. of the IAS memorandum. The criticism with regard to lack of coverage of critically important Communist controlled areas needs to be more fully illuminated. The coverage prior to February in Southern Laos was acceptable and was particularly good between 1 December 1972 and 27 January 1973. If the revised COMIREX Indo-China requirements document, currently being coordinated, does not reflect all of the requirements, then the revised paper should be modified.
7. Actions have been taken to:
 - a. Review the coverage in South Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian panhandle by the SR-71/OMT and tactical coverage to determine if further collection is warranted against the specified requirement.

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b. The operator has been requested to optimize his flight planning so as to provide best near vertical photography.

c. The operator has been requested to minimize his turns, particularly over the most important areas.



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DIA Member, ICRS

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
Imagery Analysis Service

IAS/RSD - 140/73
13 March 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, COMIREX Staff

SUBJECT : Suggested Improvements in the Programming of OLYMPIC MEET
Missions

1. OLYMPIC MEET (OMT) missions can provide us with our best means for obtaining adequate photographic coverage of Communist activity in Southeast Asia during this ceasefire period. However the current programming of these U-2R flights does not allow us to report Communist activity in a timely and effective manner. Although we consider that the present number of OMT missions is inadequate, we believe that increased intelligence could be obtained from the same number of missions presently being flown if they were better programmed to suit the needs of intelligence exploitation.
2. We can only assume that these missions are being programmed against known point targets or against specific segments of the lines of communication (LOC). They are not providing frequent, comprehensive, near-vertical, stereo, photography of a wide area, which is what the U-2R is admirably suited to do.
3. OMT missions T679 and T680 (flown 6 and 7 March 1973) are two recent examples of poor mission planning from the viewpoint of intelligence exploitation. The aircraft flew short, irregular patterns with frequent turns. Although in a hostile environment these flight tracks might help to confuse the enemy, they also reduce the amount of intelligence that can be obtained from a mission and certainly make exploitation of the imagery more difficult.
4. Because the aircraft is spending so much time in turns, there are numerous gaps in coverage and much of the film is oblique, non-stereo, and virtually useless for imagery exploitation. Although a computer printout might show that the area received blanket coverage, in reality there will be large gaps in the area covered by interpretable imagery.
5. The imagery analyst cannot follow the LOC or study an area of enemy activity on consecutive frames of a single pass, but must use small portions of three or more legs of the flight track. This is time consuming and greatly increases the possibility that something of intelligence significance may be overlooked.

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SUBJECT: Suggested Improvements in the Programming of OLYMPIC MEET Missions

6. OMT missions have not been flown over some critically important Communist controlled areas which are adjacent to friendly territory. A recent GIANT SCALE mission disclosed that the Communists are building a road at least 70 miles long from Laos into the southern part of MR-1 in South Vietnam. Because the western half of this road is already motorable, it must have been under construction for several months before comprehensive photography of this area was finally obtained in February. This intelligence gap would not have occurred if all of the Communist controlled territory in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Laotian Panhandle was being programmed for weekly coverage by OMT missions.

7. We recommend that the following necessary steps be taken to improve the photographic intelligence capabilities of OLYMPIC MEET missions:

a. U-2R photo missions should be programmed to provide at least weekly coverage of Communist controlled areas in South Vietnam, Cambodia and the Laotian Panhandle.

b. Missions should make long, straight, parallel flight lines spaced to provide overlapping, near-vertical photography.

c. By lengthening the individual legs of a mission track the number of turns will be reduced. If possible, turns should be made over less important areas, such as those areas under friendly control.

8. The attached overlays show some suggested flight tracks. No attempt was made to provide for proper spacing of flight lines or the amount of area to be covered by a specific mission. The intent is to show how the flight tracks could be improved.

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GEORGE W. ALLEN

Director

Imagery Analysis Service

Attachments:

2 Mission Plots

2 Overlays

Distribution:

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